

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 273

By Turner

A RESOLUTION to commemorate April 2015 as National
Sarcoidosis Awareness Month in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, sarcoidosis is a noncontagious systemic disease of unknown origin; it is commonly diagnosed with the detection of inflamed, microscopic growths called granulomas that grow and often affect the lungs, skin, eyes, and nervous system; and

WHEREAS, sarcoidosis can affect any organ of the body and more than one organ at any given time; and

WHEREAS, the inflammation of vital organs may cause seizures, blindness, disfiguring lesions, and heart failure; and

WHEREAS, famous people who have suffered from sarcoidosis include NBC sportscaster Darrian Chapman, Hall of Fame athletes Bill Russell and Reggie White, and gospel singer Mahalia Jackson; and

WHEREAS, comedian and actor Bernie Mac passed away as a result of sarcoidosis in 2008, and in his memory, his wife, Rhonda McCullough, created the Bernie Mac Foundation to bring more awareness to this poorly understood disease; and

WHEREAS, many individuals stricken with sarcoidosis eventually develop a serious disability or a potentially fatal condition; and

WHEREAS, sarcoidosis was once thought to be an uncommon condition, but it is now known to affect tens of thousands of people throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, African Americans disproportionately bear the burden of sarcoidosis. According to the American Lung Association, the age-adjusted incidence rate for African Americans is over three times that of Caucasians, at 35.5 cases versus 10.5 cases per 100,000 population; and

WHEREAS, according to the American Lung Association, sarcoidosis is also more likely to be spread throughout the body in African Americans, who show a higher frequency of ophthalmological, cutaneous, hepatic, and lymphatic symptoms than Caucasians, contributing to a mortality rate that is seventeen times that of Caucasians; and

WHEREAS, according to the Cleveland Clinic, African Americans are at a four-to-seventeen-times greater risk for suffering from sarcoidosis than Caucasians; and

WHEREAS, many people with sarcoidosis have no symptoms, making it difficult to measure how many people have the condition, and its causes and potential treatments remain a mystery; and

WHEREAS, skin-related symptoms of this chronic, multi-systemic disease were first recognized more than 100 years ago, but the effects of the disease on other organs were not observed until recently; and

WHEREAS, today, researchers are still trying to learn more about the causes, cures, and overall nature of sarcoidosis; and

WHEREAS, the American Lung Association, the National Sarcoidosis Society, and the National Sarcoidosis Foundation have actively advocated for more research to better understand how environmental and occupational exposures may increase the risk of sarcoidosis; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has recognized the disease and designated the month of April as Sarcoidosis Awareness Month, a month with worldwide events to increase public awareness of the need to support individuals with sarcoidosis, educate others on the environmental and occupational issues associated with sarcoidosis, and educate medical professionals who care for individuals with sarcoidosis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join with the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) as it

commemorates April as National Sarcoidosis Awareness Month to increase understanding of this tragic disease and its impact on society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.